

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS

Choir constitution, formation document, rules and regulations

1. Name

The choir shall be known as THE LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS, hereafter called 'the choir'. The choir will normally be an SATB choir. The choir shall not be known by any other name, neither will it have an affiliation to any political organisation.

2. Rehearsal

The choir shall normally rehearse weekly, on a Wednesday evening, meeting face to face (Covid Protocol permitting), via Zoom, or a combination of the two.

If a change has to be made to these arrangements, then the Secretary or a nominated person will contact all members by telephone/email/ text to provide an update.

3. Equality

The choir is a socialist organisation and is committed to advancing equality and justice. In our activities, we strive to work against all types of discrimination, to respect diversity and promote equal opportunities.

The choir will actively seek to act and campaign against discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, class, race, nationality, ethnic heritage or cultural origin, disability, religion or belief or any other aspect of identity which can lead to discrimination.

The choir believes that the ongoing fight against injustice requires everyone's support. We will keep challenging and educating ourselves and will seek ways in which we can do better and contribute more effectively to the dismantling and eradication of institutional and societal discrimination and oppression.

4. Anti-Racism

The choir cannot achieve its socialist aim of advancing equality and justice, without embedding anti-racism in our policies and practices. We undertake to work proactively towards ensuring that anti-racism is considered and acted upon in all choir decisions and activities. This includes:

- Regularly reviewing the choir repertoire to ensure that it is racially inclusive and avoids cultural appropriation
- Seeking ways to support local community and other organisations in their anti racist work
- Ensuring that there is a standing AGM item on progress and aims of our anti- racist work

We are working to open ourselves to change and be positive allies in the #BlackLivesMatter campaign.

5. Purpose

The choir promotes socialist ideals. The choir stands with those, locally and globally, who call for peace and social justice, oppose racism and fascism, fight to protect the environment, support the rights of workers.

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS

Choir constitution, formation document, rules and regulations

In agreement with members, the choir's active campaigning includes joining and/or singing on street protest marches, demonstrations, picket lines, and other suitable events or actions.

Music has been used for centuries, both to tell stories and to unite people in the struggle against oppression, in all its forms. We are a part of that tradition.

We sing a wide variety of songs, both traditional and modern. We also write original songs in response to current social and political struggles.

We periodically review our repertoire for relevance, currency and alignment to the values of the choir

6. **Membership**

The choir is an inclusive organisation and welcomes new recruits. Membership is open to anyone sharing the values of the choir and members are encouraged to attend a majority of rehearsals, particularly when preparing for a performance or event.

Members are asked to be proactive in encouraging others to join us and in promoting the values and purpose of the choir.

7. **Membership fees and expenses**

Members pay a subscription related to income. For waged members a proposed weekly fee is agreed and reviewed annually at the AGM. Unwaged members/students are asked to pay what they can afford.

All money is to be paid to the treasurer at rehearsal or directly into the bank account by direct debit. Members are asked to pay promptly without the need for reminders.

Reasonable and justified expenses will be paid, as necessary

8. **Attendance**

Members are asked to attend rehearsals and public performances during the year, as often as they can. If they are unable to attend a rehearsal and/or performance, then members are asked to let the Secretary know in advance.

9. **Choir management**

The choir shall be the responsibility of the organising committee, in consultation with the Musical Director. The committee will ensure that the choir is managed in a democratic way, with choir members always being consulted about key decisions. Committee members shall take collective responsibility for the decisions made at a meeting of the committee or sub-committee.

The committee shall regularly consist of:

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS

Choir constitution, formation document, rules and regulations

- Two Co-Chairs
- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- 2 additional choir representatives

Committee Members can undertake roles such as press officer, website coordinator, song coordinator, as necessary. The committee can also co-opt sub committees, from time to time, to take on specific tasks such as the organising of fundraising ventures.

Committee members will work independently within their roles, consulting with committee colleagues, as necessary, and reporting regularly at Committee meetings. Choir members will be kept informed of committee activities at the weekly rehearsals and will be consulted on key decisions.

The Musical Director is invited to attend committee or sub-committee meetings, as required

10. **Term of office**

All officers will be elected annually, at the Annual General Meeting of the choir.

11. **Areas of responsibility**

Musical Director – The Musical Director (or MD) shall have responsibility for the musical direction of the choir. The MD shall be appointed for their values, professionalism in music and choral production, and performance. The MD shall oversee all choir tuition, stage presentation and concert management, as well as other choral activities. The MD will be paid for this tuition, and the fee will be set in agreement with the choir committee. The MD will also encourage members of the choir to contribute expertise and songs and assist the musical development of choir members. The MD shall consult with the committee and liaise with them in decision making.

Co-Chairpersons are elected from the membership of the choir. They must promote the interests of the choir and shall, jointly, be the official ‘spokespersons’ of the choir, in consultation with the MD. The co-chairs (or one of them) will preside at meetings of the committee, direct members through the agenda and maintain good order in all choir proceedings. They will oversee the democratic decision-making of the choir. The co-chairs will also encourage the active participation of everyone in fundraising and social activities of the choir.

Secretary – The Secretary is elected from the membership of the choir. The duty of the Secretary is to be the main point of contact for the public and event organisers and also to take and record minutes of all choir meetings. The Secretary will notify committee members of meetings and also provide them with notice of agenda. The Secretary will notify choir members of rehearsals and singing events. The Secretary will also write communications, on behalf of the choir.

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS

Choir constitution, formation document, rules and regulations

Assistant Secretary - The Assistant Secretary is an elected member of the organizing committee. They will assist the Secretary, as required, and be responsible for the production and copying of sheet music and song-sheets.

Treasurer – The Treasurer is elected from the membership of the choir. It is the responsibility of the treasurer to keep the accounts up to date and in good order; to pay invoices promptly (including the fee paid to the MD) and to form a good professional relationship with funders. The Treasurer must keep the committee informed of the financial position of the organisation.

Membership Secretary – the Membership Secretary is an elected member of the organizing committee. They are responsible for maintaining an up to date list of the membership, providing introductory information to new members and encouraging the recruitment of new members. They will usually be the first point of contact for potential new members.

12. **Role of the committee**

The committee has the responsibility to ensure the organisation meets its stated purpose and that members observe the constitution. The committee will also receive the accounts of the choir and decide on fundraising actions and policy. The committee will ensure that activities are carried out and decisions are made in a democratic way and in the best interests of the choir. If necessary, the committee can organise sub-committees to take on specific tasks such as finance or fundraising or the organising of a specific event. No member of the committee shall exercise their right to power for the adverse affect of the choir.

13. **Meetings of the committee**

The committee shall meet regularly to discuss choir business and finance. These meetings will normally be held monthly. However the committee can meet as often as required and a meeting can be called at any time by the Secretary or a Co-Chair.

14. **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The AGM shall normally be held on the fourth Wednesday in January of each year. The purpose of the AGM shall be to:

- Elect or re-elect officers of the choir
- Elect or re-elect up to 2 other committee members
- To receive the statement of accounts from the Treasurer
- To receive the report from the choir chairperson(s)
- To receive sub-committee reports, as necessary
- To decide the amount of membership subscription for waged members

Matters can be debated at the AGM after prior notice has been given, in writing, to the choir Secretary, at least seven days prior to the meeting.

15. **Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)**

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS

Choir constitution, formation document, rules and regulations

An EGM can be called at any time, provided the request has been made in writing, proposed and seconded. At least seven days' notice has to be given for any motion to be raised at an EGM.

16. Member code of conduct and attire

Members of the choir shall conduct themselves in keeping with the values of the choir. Choir members will treat each other with respect and value each other's contributions.

Choir members will be responsible for maintaining their own copies of the choir repertoire

For choir performances, members shall attire in accordance with the dress policy of the choir. The uniform of the choir shall normally be a red top, dark skirt or trousers and, if possible, a choir badge.

Members are asked not to be under the influence of drink or drugs at a rehearsal or public performance. Any member, thought to be so, may not be permitted to participate.

When engaged in choir business no member shall take it upon themselves to make any official complaint to the hiring organisation. If a member has a concern or grievance with the booking agent or venue, then the member will bring the issue to the attention of choir secretary, who will bring the matter before the committee for consideration.

17. Accessibility

The committee will make every effort to try to ensure that rehearsal and performance venues are accessible for all

18. Public performances

All members of the choir should conduct themselves in a manner fitting to the occasion, at all times.

19. Health and safety

Members have a duty of care under health and safety law for themselves and others affected by their action. The choir cannot take responsibility for any injury, or the transmission of infection, however caused.

Members will always be notified of Health and Safety issues at a performance or rehearsal venue. When required, protocols – the Covid 19 protocol, for example – will be drawn up by the committee and put in place.

If a member has a health and safety issue with a venue, they must speak with the Choir Secretary. Health and safety matters will be dealt with by a member of the choir committee, and should not be dealt with individually by a member of the choir.

20. Public engagement and fees

Requests for performances should be directed to the Choir Secretary, who shall seek authorisation from the committee, choir members and the Musical Director.

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS

Choir constitution, formation document, rules and regulations

The choir may perform public concerts in order to fundraise for agreed causes, organisations, or for choir funding. Fees and donations should be paid to the choir treasurer by the organising body.

The choir will attempt to support campaigns or organisations that share the ethos of The Liverpool Socialist Singers, by performing at events at no charge.

21. Issue and use of song sheets

- Members will be issued with a starter file of songs, free of charge.
- The full repertoire of the choir will be regularly updated and posted on the choir website
- Sheet music will be made available, when possible, for those for whom this would be helpful
- Specific song-sheets will be provided for events or performances, as required

22. Social activity

The social aspect of the choir is to be encouraged, wherever possible. The choir, as an organisation, aims to nurture a friendly atmosphere and social meetings are to be encouraged. In addition, choir trips can be organised. Members may be asked to pay towards the cost of such trips.

23. Massed choral participation

From time to time the choir may be asked to participate in combined concerts or massed choral events. Participation at such an event is subject to the consent of choir members and the Musical Director and this decision will be taken in light of our diary and financial position.

24. Fundraising

A number of fundraising events will be organized, during the year, by the committee or a fundraising sub-group, and members of the choir are expected to support as many of these events as possible.

25. Financial probity

Liverpool Socialist Singers is a not for profit organisation. Any income and property of the group shall be applied solely towards promoting the objects and aims of the group. The division of profits or assets among group members is prohibited.

26. Winding up the organisation

In the event of winding up the organisation, any revenue, after debtors, will be distributed to organisations, with the same or similar objects to The Liverpool Socialist Singers.

27. Changes to the Constitution

Alterations and/or amendments to this constitution may be agreed by simple majority of members at a properly convened E.G.M. or A.G.M.

The Liverpool Socialist Singers (updated November 2021)

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SINGERS

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Adopted by the membership of the choir at an EGM, held on Monday November 8th 2021.

Signed by:

The co-Chairperson: Anna Saunders Date: 08.11.2021

The Secretary: Karen Jonason Date: 08.11.2021